

INTERVIEW SKILLS

Helping you prepare for the
day and after your interview



Great place to work, great place to live



Introduction

This booklet aims to:

- Give you a greater understanding of what to expect when you attend interviews
- Help you feel more confident and prepared ahead of your interview and on the day
- Offer guidance to get the most out of your interview
- Assist with questions you may be asked and help with thinking about questions to ask
- Give you advice about the next steps after your interview.

Before your interview

- **Congratulations on getting an interview.** You can be confident that your application has met the criteria for the job being advertised, and the organisation is interested in finding out more about you and what you can bring to the role.
- Initially, double-check that you have actually 'accepted' the interview and inform the potential employer of any specific requirements, such as the need for an accessible room.
- Before attending your interview, research the organisation and ensure that you are up-to-date with their services, values and aims. Look on their website and social media channels for easily accessible information.
- Consider calling the contact person for an informal chat or even making an informal visit first; many people will appreciate your proactive communication and be willing to answer any initial questions you may have about the job.
- Find out about the selection process. Will you need to do a presentation? If so, who is the audience, and what should be the subject? Are there any other exercises, or is it solely an interview?
- Find out if you need to bring any identification documents with you.
- Plan your journey to get rid of any worries caused by rushing on the day, and check parking or public transport where necessary. Aim to arrive about 10 to 15 minutes early if possible.
- Plan what you want to wear so you feel comfortable, yet professional. Feeling confident about your appearance will boost your confidence on the day.
- Take a copy of the job description, specification and your application with you, allowing you to review what you have already shared and identify any additional points you may need to address.

The day of your interview

- A selection process is a two-way thing – it is up to you and the employer to both get enough information about each other to see if they will offer you a post – and if you want to accept it!
- Don't worry if you are feeling a bit nervous – the interviewer is probably nervous as well. Practice a bit of mindfulness or breathing exercises to help you feel as relaxed as possible.
- Try to smile, be polite and friendly, and make eye contact.
- Walk confidently into the room, but don't sit down until invited to do so.
- If you don't hear a question properly, or understand what is being asked of you, feel free to ask for clarification.
- Make sure you don't interrupt the person asking the question.
- If there are several people in the room, look at the person who asked you a question, but try to glance at others to check that they are following you.
- Always try to explain and evidence your answers to questions, linking back to previous experiences.
- Be aware of the language you're using, keeping it professional.



Topics and questions

There are lots of different things you may be asked about:

Technical questions about the job – this is often evidenced by your qualifications, but many employers also ask about key areas to check your understanding, or even recent changes to see if you keep abreast of the subject.

Presentations are often used to assess communication skills - if this is the case, you will probably have been given the subject in advance – make a few slides and practice the presentation several times. Bring the presentation with you on a memory stick (or email it to the employer in advance). It can be useful to bring a print out and any handout slides.

In-tray exercises - these have been shown to be very effective at providing evidence for effective decision-making. It might be a typing test, a written budget question, or even a medicines management quiz. Sometimes there are scenario-based questions, "what would you do if..?" Ask if you will have any selection tests when you accept the invitation so that you're prepared on the day.

Involving others - many healthcare organisations involve people who use their services, carers or someone with 'lived experience' in the selection process. This is important as it brings a unique perspective into the skills needed for the role. Be aware this might happen and think of any questions you might have for them.

NHS values-based questions - values-based recruitment is an approach that attracts and recruits students, trainees and employees on the basis that their individual values and behaviours align with the values of the NHS Constitution. You may be asked interview questions about examples when you have demonstrated these values, or they can be part of scenario-based questions.

The six NHS values are:



*Working
together for
patients*



*Commitment
to quality
of care*



*Everyone
counts*



Compassion



*Respect and
dignity*



*Improving
lives*

Competency-based questions - these focus on actual experiences you have had and are useful as they can provide strong evidence of your skills and knowledge. Think of a real incident, what you did and what happened. We all learn from everything we do, so don't be afraid to say that you would do it differently next time.

Think about your questions for the employer. Useful questions may include:-

- Is there anything that you need for the job that I have not been able to evidence?
- When and how will I hear about the outcome?
- Will I be able to get feedback, and if so, how do I access this?
- What development opportunities and training are available?

At the end of the interview, thank the interviewers and shake their hand.

For additional guidance and access to our Career Development sessions, please visit jobs.dpt.nhs.uk/careers-hub

After the interview

After the interview, take some time to reflect. You might want to think about:

- What went well and what could have gone better.
- Were there any questions you could have answered differently.
- Were there any questions you forgot to ask – if so, you can still contact the employer and ask.

If you haven't heard back from the employer within two weeks, give them a call to find out why. Administration errors can occur, and some organisations can be slow in their recruitment processes – don't panic and assume you have not been successful.

If this interview isn't successful, remember the points from your reflection and use them as ways to fine-tune your next interview.

Useful resources

- **NHS Jobs - Managing the interview**
www.jobs.nhs.uk/advice/interview_manage.html
- **The Student Room**
www.thestudentroom.co.uk/jobs/apply/interviews/interview-tips
- **NHS Jobs – Help and support for applicants**
<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/new-nhs-jobs-service/help-and-support-applicants>
- **Managing the Interview**
<https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/search/advice/managing-the-interview>
- **Career planning - Applications and Interviews**
<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/career-planning/applications-and-interviews/applications-and-interviews>
- **Employment checks for new employees**
<https://www.nhsemployers.org/articles/employment-checks-new-employees>

We provide events that will inform and educate those who may be looking to start a career in mental health, learning disability and neurodiversity, or help those already working with us develop their careers. For information or to sign up, please scan the QR code.



Contact us

If you have any questions, please contact our dedicated Careers Hub on dpt.careershub@nhs.net

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